

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 IO-14 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00  
PM-05 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02  
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 MCT-01 ACDA-12 EB-08 OMB-01  
TRSE-00 /123 W

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P R 021535Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3707  
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA  
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA  
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM  
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO  
AMEMBASSY GABORONE  
AMEMBASSY LILONGWE  
AMEMBASSY LAGOS  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK  
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PDEV, RH, UK  
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: INTERVIEW WITH SMITH

1. FOLLOWING ARTICLE ENTITLED "DOOR OPEN FOR PATRIOTIC FRONT" BY LOUIS HEREN APPEARED IN THE MARCH 2 EDITION OF THE "TIMES." THE ARTICLE IS BASED ON HEREN'S INTERVIEW WITH IAN SMITH YESTERDAY. (THE "TIMES" ALSO REPORTS THE SALISBURY TALKS HAVE AGREED TO DECEMBER 31, 1978 AS THE INDEPENDENCE DATE FOR ZIMBABWE).

2. BEGIN QUOTE:  
MR. IAN SMITH, THE RHODESIAN PRIME MINISTER, TODAY  
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SAID THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT WERE GOING BETTER THAN WAS EXPECTED. HE AND THE BLACK NATIONALIST LEADERS WERE CLOSER TO AGREEMENT THAN EVER BEFORE.  
NOT ALL THE PROBLEMS HAD BEEN RESOLVED, BUT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT THE TALKS COULD BE COMPLETED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

MR. SMITH GAVE AN INTERVIEW TO THE TIMES IN HIS OFFICE BEFORE TODAY'S MINISTERIAL MEETING. HE WAS RELAXED BUT WATCHFUL, AND REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON THE FINAL OUTCOME.

SOME PEOPLE, HE SAID, THOUGHT THAT LEGAL INDEPENDENCE COULD BE ACHIEVED WITHIN SIX MONTHS, OTHERS WITHIN A COUPLE OF YEARS. THAT WAS GUESSWORK, BUT HE PLEDGED HIMSELF TO PROCEED AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.

HE SAW NO BENEFIT IN DELAYING THE FINAL OUTCOME.

MOST RHODESIANS WOULD WELCOME THE END OF UNCERTAINTY AND SPECULATION, AND LOOKED FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN THEY COULD SEE CLEARLY WHAT THE FUTURE WAS GOING TO BE IN PRACTICAL TERMS. "SO THERE IS NO INTENTION ON

MY PART TO TRY AND DELAY THIS PROCESS," MR. SMITH SAID.

HE AGREED THAT IT WAS LOGICAL, AND THE BEST FOR RHODESIA, TO SEEK INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE FORMATION OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT.

THE ECONOMY WAS UNDER VERY SEVERE PRESSURE BECAUSE OF THE WORLD RECESSION, WHICH WAS COMPOUNDED BY SANCTIONS. MORE PEOPLE WERE LOSING THEIR JOBS--THE RATIO WAS 100 BLACKS OUT OF WORK TO EVERY WHITE--AND THAT PART OF THE WORLD WHICH HAD A CONSCIENCE SHOULD BE UNDER AN OBLIGATION TO MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION.

MR. SMITH SAID HE HAD BEEN ASSURED THAT, HAD HE ACCEPTED THE PROPOSALS MADE BY DR. KISSINGER, THE FORMER AMERICAN SECRETARY OF STATE, SANCTIONS WOULD BE REMOVED  
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AND TERRORISM WOULD CEASE. HE WAS NOW GOING FURTHER THAN HE WAS ASKED TO DO PREVIOUSLY, AND THERE WAS NO JUST REASON FOR DENYING NOW WHAT HE HAD BEEN OFFERED EARLIER.

HE HOPED THAT BRITAIN WOULD MOVE QUICKLY. BOTH LABOUR AND CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENTS HAD ALWAYS SAID THAT THE REMOVAL OF SANCTIONS WOULD BE NO PROBLEM.

THE ENDING OF TERRORISM WAS DIFFERENT. DR. KISSINGER COULD NOT GUARANTEE A CESSATION, BUT HE DID SAY THAT HE SPOKE FOR THE UNITED STATES, BRITAIN AND OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. HE HAD SAID THAT THIS WAS NO MEAN FORCE, AND IF THEY DEDICATED THEMSELVES TO BRINGING TERRORISM TO AN END THEY WOULD EVENTUALLY BE SUCCESSFUL.

NEVERTHELESS, HE EXPECTED THAT THE TERRORISTS WOULD HAVE A LAST FLING, IF A POLITICAL AGREEMENT WAS REACHED. THERE HAD ALWAYS BEEN AN INCREASE OF TERRORISM IN THE PAST WHENEVER AN AGREEMENT SEEMED POSSIBLE.

MR. SMITH SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES WERE NOW MORE SYMPATHETIC, AND RIGHTLY SO. "WE HAVE ACCEPTED WHAT THEY HAD BEEN ASKING US TO ACCEPT FOR MANY YEARS--MAJORITY RULE."

AS TO THE PATRIOTIC FRONT, GUERRILLA ORGANIZATION,

MR. SMITH SAID THAT ITS INCLUSION IN A FUTURE GOVERNMENT WAS ALWAYS POSSIBLE, BUT NOT NECESSARILY A LIKELIHOOD. ONCE AGAIN, HE UNDERSTOOD THAT THERE WERE EXTERNAL FORCES TRYING TO BRING THIS ABOUT BECAUSE IT WAS THE

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ONLY LOGICAL THING LEFT.

MR. SMITH HAD EARLIER SAID THAT HE WOULD ACCEPT MR. JOSHUA NKOMO; TODAY HE INDICATED THAT HE WOULD ALSO ACCEPT MR. ROBERT MUGABE, ALTHOUGH HE IS REGARDED HERE AS A MARXIST. HE SAID THAT HE DEALT IN PRINCIPLES, NOT PERSONALITIES. ANY TERRORIST HAD THE RIGHT TO RETURN IF HE WAS PREPARED TO WORK CONSTITUTIONALLY FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT.

MR. SMITH SAW NO NEED TO ALIGN THE INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WITH THE ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS. THEY HAD BEEN FORMULATED, HE SAID, BY PEOPLE WHO KNEW LITTLE ABOUT RHODESIA AND WOULD NOT HAVE TO LIVE HERE WITH THE CON-

SEQUENCES OF THEIR PROPOSALS.

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NOR DID HE THINK THAT A BRITISH PRESENCE HERE DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD BEFORE INDEPENDENCE WOULD BE USEFUL. A BRITISH CHAIRMAN OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT WOULD JUST CREATE MORE DEADLOCKS AND PROBLEMS.

A BRITISH PRESENCE, HE INSISTED, WAS NOT A NECESSARY PART OF THE RETURN TO LEGALITY. WAS IT A LITTLE FRILL TO HELP SAVE THE FACE OF SOME POLITICIANS IN BRITAIN? THAT QUESTION HAD TO BE ASKED. HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE INTERESTS OF RHODESIA HAD TO BE PREJUDICED IN ORDER TO HELP POLITICIANS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD TO OVERCOME THEIR PROBLEMS.

THE BLACK NATIONALIST LEADERS DO NOT WANT MR. SMITH TO CONTINUE AS PRIME MINISTER DURING THE INTERIM PERIOD, AND WHEN I PUT THIS TO HIM HE THOUGHT THAT SOMETHING MIGHT BE WORKED OUT.

HE QUICKLY ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT WHETHER PEOPLE LIKED IT OR NOT THE PRESENT PARLIAMENT WAS THE SOVEREIGN BODY UNDER THE EXISTING CONSTITUTION. ONLY AN ELECTION COULD CHANGE THAT.

HE WAS THE PRIME MINISTER, HE SAID, AND NOBODY IN THE WORLD COULD DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. HE WOULD CO-OPERATE, BUT NOBODY IN THEIR RIGHT SENSES WOULD UNDERMINE THE CONSTITUTION BECAUSE IT WOULD ONLY LEAD TO THE BREAKDOWN OF LAW AND ORDER AND ENSUING CHAOS. MR. SMITH IS NATURALLY MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE WHITE ELECTORATE HERE THAN WITH THE VIEWS OF BRITAIN OR THE UNITED STATES. HE SAID TODAY THAT HE THOUGHT THE MAJORITY WOULD STAY IN THE COUNTRY, PROVIDED THE ARRANGEMENTS HE SOUGHT WERE ACCEPTED BY THE BLACK LEADERS.

"BUT IF WE DO NOT, THEN I BELIEVE THAT THERE WILL BE A MASS EXODUS OF WHITES FROM RHODESIA," HE ADDED. THIS WOULD BE A TRAGEDY FOR THE BLACKS AS WELL AS THE WHITES.

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IT WOULD BE THE END OF CIVILIZED GOVERNMENT. HE HOPED TO SUCCEED IN HELPING TO CREATE A CONSTITUTION UNDER WHICH BLACKS AND WHITES COULD GO ON LIVING AND WORKING TOGETHER AND PARTICIPATING IN THE GOVERNMENT OF THEIR COUNTRY. IT WOULD BE THE FIRST TIME IN HISTORY THIS WOULD HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED. MR. SMITH SAID HE WOULD THEN RETIRE FROM POLITICS. HE LONGED TO BECOME A FARMER AGAIN.

I REMINDED MR. SMITH THAT MANY IN BRITAIN DID NOT REGARD HIM AS A SIMPLE FARMER BUT AS A DEVIOUS POLITICIAN. HIS REPLY WAS THAT HE NEVER REALIZED HOW DEVIOUS THE GAME OF POLITICS WAS UNTIL HE CAME IN CONTACT WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. AFTER THAT EXPERIENCE HE HAD NO COMPUNCTION IN SAYING THAT POLITICS WAS A GAME IN WHICH NO HOLDS WERE BARRED, THAT IF HE WAS TO SURVIVE HE WOULD HAVE TO ABIDE BY THE RULES WHICH THE OTHER PLAYERS HAD INTRODUCED.

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